

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 19, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR

✓ The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Director of Central Intelligence

The attached memorandum attempts a summary of the conclusions which I thought we reached yesterday. I should be glad to have any corrections or additions so that I may circulate an agreed document tomorrow.

*McG. B.*  
McGeorge Bundy

TOP SECRET ATTACHMENT

*See serial 911.  
with him.  
Bundy's office  
informed.*

*2/20/63  
3:53 p.m. NDL*

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February 19, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR

The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Director of Central Intelligence

As a result of a discussion on Monday, February 18th, from 5:30 to 7:30, a consensus emerged among the four of us on the following guidelines for discussion of various aspects of the Cuban problem, both in public and in Executive Session.

1. The invasion of April 1961 and its aftermath.

It was agreed that only those who had had an active part in the April invasion would discuss it before Congressional committees. With respect to the prisoners of that operation and their exchange, all questions would be referred to Mr. Nicholas Katzenbach or Mr. Robert Hurwitch, who would be made available to testify to any appropriate committee. Questions relating to the future of the released prisoners would be referred to Mr. Cottrell of the Cuban Coordinating Committee.

2. Intelligence collection and evaluation in September and October 1962

- a. It was agreed that the first responsibility in discussion of this subject belonged to the Director of Central Intelligence.
- b. With respect to statements made by Administration officials in September and October, it was our expectation that these statements would turn out to be consistent with the agreed estimates of the intelligence community at the time, except where an individual might have signalled a personal view as being at variance with the estimates. (The only individual known to me who may have done this is Mr. McCone himself.) It was agreed that CIA would prepare, in consultation with State and Defense, a full record of these

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estimates which could then be submitted in whatever way seemed most effective to deal with charges against such witnesses as Mr. George Ball and Mr. W. P. Bundy.

c. It was agreed that all witnesses should explain that unverified refugee and agent reports were not normally forwarded to high policy officers and that before the 15th of October the prevailing intelligence judgment was that there was not credible evidence of offensive missiles in Cuba. (This is the conclusion of the DCI's coordinated report to the President's Board, pp. 47-48.) There were reports of sufficient interest to lead to targetting of the overflight of October 14th, but no reports which led to changes in the estimates of any intelligence agency as reported to the President's senior advisers.

d. With respect to overflight policy, we agreed that all flights requested of the President were authorized by him; all priorities set by the USIB were accepted; only one low-level flight was proposed by a senior intelligence officer, and this one (for overflight of Banes) was held up until appropriate efforts had been made by a high-level flight. The absence of this low-level flight did not prevent positive identification of the Banes site in intelligence publications of September 17th.

e. It was agreed that refugee reports proved useful, but that they were not adequate for positive identification without photographic confirmation.

f. We also agreed that Senator Keating was not in fact way ahead of the Government with respect to offensive weapons. His first assertion that there were missile bases in Cuba came on October 10th. By that time, the President had already authorized the flight of October 14, which was targetted for the verification or disproof of raw reports of the sort upon which Senator Keating appears to have relied. The Senator took a chance on unverified information. The Executive Branch made arrangements to check it in the most effective possible way. We need not feel defensive over having chosen this course of action.

g. With respect to "management of news," the fact is that there was no special control over the dissemination of verified information

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except between October 15th and October 22nd. There were justified limitations upon widespread dissemination of unverified information. There were also, by some Administration spokesmen, too energetic assertions that because we did not have credible evidence of Soviet personnel and weapons beyond those in the agreed estimates, no such personnel or weapons were in fact in Cuba. This was to assert a negative which in the nature of things could not be certain, and we should accept the fact that some overstatements were made.

h. We agreed that, on balance, and judged by the result, a basically creditable job was done on the intelligence front. Effective and timely reports were produced on all weapons systems before they became operational. That very sensitive intelligence weapon, the U-2, was used without public clamor and with decisive effect. A denied area was penetrated accurately and in time. We also agreed that in retrospect there were discernible weaknesses in this process: as, for example, that the estimates took too little account of the possibility of a dangerous new departure in Soviet policy; that there was a lack of all-out energy in framing and presenting intelligence requirements; that delays in executing approved reconnaissance missions were not reported upward, or monitored downward; and that dissenting recommendations were not carried to the President. Remedial action on all these matters is in hand under the Director of Central Intelligence, who himself accurately anticipated the Soviet move.

3. The present situation

a. The military position. We hoped that our current estimates could be ironed out closely between CIA and Defense, especially on the following points:

- (1) That the agreed number of missiles and bombers did leave and that our inspection at sea was convincing.
- (2) That our policy on surveillance is to conduct steady high-level overflight and to use low-level flights when it is agreed in particular cases that they are necessary.
- (3) That our estimates on MIGs, submarine bases and FROGS are what they are, and that any apparent discrepancies are due to personal opinion or differences in methods of statement not to disagree to estimates.

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- (4) There is an important distinction between offensive weapons and defensive weapons -- a distinction which was first made by the President in September -- although many spokesmen have correctly pointed out that one must be careful about making this distinction too hard and fast.

b. Subversion. It was agreed that the State Department would take the lead in stating our view of policy toward subversion toward Cuba, and Mr. Edwin Martin has agreed to circulate to all concerned his authoritative statement on the subject delivered to the Latin American Sub-Committee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on February 18, 1963.

4. General assessment and policy.

It was agreed that insofar as possible, we would all be guided by authoritative Presidential statements on these matters, and I shall circulate later today a set of the relevant Presidential statements since November 20, when the President first made an authoritative summary of the U. S. position as it stood after the October crisis.

McGeorge Bundy

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